

SAN FRANCISCO'S SHARED YOUTH DATABASE

Overview

One of goals of the Children, Youth, and Families System of Care (CYF-SOC) is to provide comprehensive, coordinated care for youth receiving services in multiple child-serving agencies. Information technology plays a critical role in ensuring that multidisciplinary treatment teams have accurate and timely information about a youth as they develop and monitor his or her treatment plan, and in providing managers and evaluators with objective information about client- and program-level outcomes. The CYF-SOC took the lead in developing the Shared Youth Database (SYDB), a data warehouse containing comprehensive service and/or encounter data from three child-serving systems: Children's Mental Health, Child Welfare, and Juvenile Probation. Data in the SYDB are updated quarterly.

Features

The Shared Youth Database has three major components, described below.

1) Individual Client Service/Encounter History

Also called the "Client Look-Up" table, this feature enables frontline staff to access individual client service or encounter histories in partner agencies. Individual client information can only be accessed with parental consent or with a court order for youth who are dependents of the court. This feature is primarily used by intake workers to determine if services have already been initiated in other departments, and by case managers to learn about a client's service history.

2) Aggregate Management Reports

The Management Report feature enables managers to produce customized aggregate reports about groups of clients using a user-friendly database interface, or to select one of dozens of "canned" management reports included in the database. Reports can be customized using a wide array of parameters, such as the type of program, client clinical or demographic characteristics, or dates of arrest. Client "overlap" reports provide aggregate demographic and service information for youth who are served in one or more system, and are typically used for service planning and policy development purposes (See page 17 for clients served in multiple systems during FY 2006-07).

3) Research and Evaluation

The Shared Youth Database is also used to assess outcomes for multi-system clients. It not only provides objective information on length and type of involvement in each system, but it also enables us to learn about how youth move through various systems. Comparing patterns of program involvement with specific client risk factors and demographics allows evaluators and managers to identify opportunities for early intervention, to understand factors that contribute to differential outcomes, and to develop the interagency structures to effectively treat high risk children and youth.

SYDB Expansion Project

In 2007, the CYF-SOC received funding from the Mental Health Services Act to integrate two important data components into the SYDB: school attendance and achievement, and substance abuse treatment. Over the past year we have worked closely with San Francisco Unified School District to identify the set of data elements to be shared and the process for incorporating the data into our existing data warehouse. School information is particularly important because it often provides an early indicator that a child or youth is experiencing mental health or other difficulties. Positive school performance may also be seen as a "protective" factor that can help explain why children and youth with similar risk factors, such as histories of child maltreatment or other exposure to trauma, may have different long-term outcomes. Similarly, substance abuse treatment data will provide a more complete picture of the challenges faced by youth in our system, and is an additional outcome of great interest to our systems, particularly as we work to integrate both mental and substance abuse treatment services.